



**State of South Carolina**  
**Office of The Lieutenant Governor**

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**Lt. Governor André Bauer Announces Living Well South Carolina**

(Columbia, S.C.) Lt. Governor André Bauer announced today (February 16, 2007) the startup of classes for "Living Well South Carolina," a public-private partnership bringing an innovative health program designed to teach seniors who suffer from a list of common chronic diseases techniques for better managing their conditions to 15 South Carolina counties.

The program was started with an \$850,000 grant from the U.S. Administration on Aging, along with financial contributions from the South Carolina Hospital Association and Care Improvement Plus, a Medicare Special Needs Plan specifically designed for chronic disease sufferers. Chronic diseases such as diabetes, chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD) and heart disease are at record levels in the U.S. and in South Carolina. In fact, South Carolina ranks near the top of the nation for the prevalence of chronic disease according to the State Department of Health and Environmental Control (DHEC), one of the state agencies involved in the project.

"We are very excited about this program, first of all because of the tremendous difference it can make in the quality of life of the people who take advantage of it, and second because it's a great example of two key principles that are going to be very important in how we prepare for the future of aging in South Carolina," said Bauer. "In order to maximize limited tax dollars and get the most bang for the buck for taxpayers, we have to move in the direction of solid, evidence-based programs that have been shown to work and that are monitored for results. It's also important that we find ways to partner with the private sector entities who are involved in providing healthcare and other services to seniors, and this project does both of those things."

Coordination for Living Well South Carolina relies on regional and local partnerships. In addition to the Lt. Governor's Office on Aging and DHEC, the Appalachia, Trident and Pee Dee Area Agencies on Aging are also actively involved in supporting the program in the three targeted regions of the state, while county-level organizations are responsible for providing the classroom-based program. Senior Solutions and Senior Centers of Spartanburg will offer classes in the upstate counties of Anderson, Oconee, Spartanburg, Greenville, Pickens and Cherokee; the Darlington County Council on Aging and the Senior Citizens Association of Florence County will offer classes in the Pee Dee counties of Darlington, Marion, Marlboro, Chesterfield, Florence and Dillon; and Lowcountry Senior Center will offer classes in Charleston, Berkeley and Dorchester counties.

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Living Well South Carolina classes will begin in March in 12 of the 15 counties piloting the project. Program leaders expect to add classes in the additional counties in the second and third years of the program, with classes eventually available in all counties statewide if the project shows positive results. USC's Arnold School of Public Health is also a program partner, and will provide monitoring and evaluation of the participants in Living Well classes to gauge those results.

"That's evidence-based programming in a nutshell," said Lt. Governor Bauer. "Try it, measure the results against the investment, and if it's effective, keep it going, that's the best approach. With our senior population on track to double over the next two decades, we simply can't afford to spend money blindly on programs and hope that they're working. We've got to be accountable for measurable results."

Living Well South Carolina is a "chronic disease self-management program" centering on a six-week-long series of classes developed by medical researchers at Stanford University. The classes are taught in community settings such as senior centers, churches, or hospitals by trained leaders who also suffer from chronic diseases themselves. Years of research and assessments have shown the effectiveness of this approach in teaching people to manage their conditions, leading to better overall health and big savings in the cost of providing healthcare for those individuals. In previous studies, the program that Living Well South Carolina is based on has a proven track record of improving the health of participants, who reported increases in their ability to engage in normal daily activities, better management of their symptoms, better communication with their doctors and less stress and fatigue.

For more information about local class schedules planned for March in the Upstate, Charleston-area and Pee Dee regions of the state, contact the following agencies or organizations:

- **Upstate** – Contact **Torrey Geer** at Senior Solutions Inc. **(864) 225-3370** (coordinating classes in **Anderson** and **Oconee** counties) or **Pat Ruff** at Senior Centers of Spartanburg Inc. **(864) 596-3910** (coordinating classes in **Spartanburg** and **Cherokee, Greenville and Pickens** counties).
- **Charleston-area** – Contact **Jill Jackson or Elizabeth Bernat** at the Lowcountry Senior Center at **(843)762-9555** (coordinating classes in **Charleston, Berkeley and Dorchester** counties).
- **Pee Dee** – Contact **Ashley Anderson** at the Darlington County Council on Aging **(843) 393-8521** (coordinating classes in **Darlington, Marlboro and Chesterfield** counties) or **Rebecca Whittle** at the Senior Citizen's Association of Florence County **(843) 669-6761** (coordinating classes in **Florence, Marion and Dillon** counties).

For more information about the research into the effectiveness of chronic disease self-management programs, visit the Stanford University medical school's Patient Education web site at the following URL: <http://patienteducation.stanford.edu/programs/cdsmp.html> .

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**(pictures follow on page 3)**



**PHOTO CAPTION:** Living Well South Carolina Coordinators from around the state received training in delivering the program at the Lt. Governor's Office on Aging in Columbia in December.